

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 22, 2010

Senator Max Baucus  
Chairman  
United States Senate Finance Committee  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Chuck Grassley  
Ranking Member  
United States Senate Finance Committee  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Baucus and Ranking Member Grassley:

We write to you today to bring to your attention the urgent need for your Committee to act on much-needed aviation safety improvements in the FAA Reauthorization bill.


The February 12, 2009 crash of Continental Connection Flight 3407 in Clarence Center, New York took the lives of 49 onboard the aircraft and one person on the ground. This tragedy has shed light on the serious safety concerns we face every time we fly. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has held public hearings and issued preliminary reports on the factors contributing to the crash, and numerous hearings have been held in both houses of Congress. Nearly one year after the crash, Congress has not enacted legislation to address the clearly identified deficiencies in pilot training, crew rest, pilot commuting among other issues.

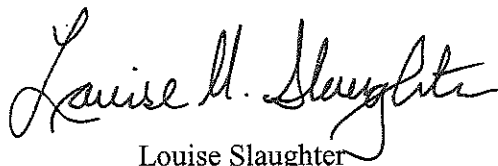
The families who suffered the loss of a loved one on Flight 3407 have tirelessly fought to improve the safety of our skies through countless meetings with Members of Congress and aviation experts, frequent trips to Washington, D.C. to attend hearings, and constant appeals for action. This year-long effort resulted in House passage of the Airline Safety and Pilot Training Improvement Act last October. This bill included a number of long-sought-after reforms, including new rules on stall recovery training, pilot rest and minimum training and experience requirements for flight crews. Unfortunately, action on many of these safety reforms has been held up in the Senate.


While the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation has marked up S.1451, the Air Transportation Modernization and Safety Improvement Act, your Committee has yet to consider the revenue title for the bill. As we approach the one-year anniversary of this terrible tragedy, we urge you to move forward with consideration of this bipartisan, overdue and absolutely necessary aviation safety reform bill. Each day Congress delays puts the flying public at unnecessary risk. We can wait no longer.

It has taken more than 40 years to overhaul FAA rules governing aviation safety. It is time to act now without delay to ensure the very best pilots with the best training are in the cockpit of our nation's commercial airliners. We appreciate your efforts and look forward to working with you further on these issues.

Sincerely,

  
Christopher J. Lee  
Member of Congress

  
Louise Slaughter  
Member of Congress

  
Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress

CC: Majority Leader Harry Reid  
Minority Leader Mitch McConnell